

CDSAR
Questions and Answers
For Use by Affected Public Affairs Offices

Q1: What is the CDSAR system? What does it do?

A1: The Air University Course Development, Student Administration and Registrar (CDSAR) system. The CDSAR system supports the enlisted Career Development Course (CDC) production, input/editing, transmission, and distribution within Air Education and Training Command and Air University. CDSAR assigns, tracks, controls, evaluates, administers students' enrollments, maintains records on students taking Professional Military Education (PME) programs and courses by correspondence or in residence. CDSAR was designed to support PME, Professional Continuing Education/specialized courses, Career Development Courses, Weighted Airman Promotion (WAPS) and warehousing/distribution of distance learning courses for the Air Force. The major components of CDSAR are: Course Development (CD), Student Administration & Registrar (SAR), Warehouse support (distribution, inventory), Postal Operations (PO).

Q2: When did it go down and what caused it to go down?

A2: CDSAR went down on 13 May 10 and has been inoperable due to multiple server hard drive failures. The system is 20 years old.

Q3: How many Airmen are affected by the system going down?

A3: As of the day the system went down, we had 115,962 enrolled in DL courses. In addition, we have 743 in-resident students graduating from both Air War College and Air Command and Staff College this year whose records will be manually updated in the MilPDS.

Q4: How are these Airmen affected?

A4: Ability to enroll, participate, test and graduate. Graduation data for officers and enlisted in Distance Learning PME programs cannot be passed to MiLPDS nor can retirement points be passed to Air Force Reserve Personnel Center for Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard Members. Active Airmen, who are pursuing some form of Air Force distance learning, PME, CDC or specialized education are not able to progress (e.g., have their grades posted to include permanent record at MiLPDS, receive their next volume of material, and those who need to enroll.)

Q5: How have records been updated from the time the system went down?

A5: CRITICAL: All affected operations (Distance Learning credit and progress for AWC, ACSC, SOS, SNCOA, professional continuing education specialized courses, and CDCs, Test Control Facilities and CCAF Associate Degree credit) except for Air War College and Air Command and Staff in-resident have stopped. We are working those officers who will meet boards in June and July with manual updates. We have discussed this issue with enlisted

promotions; there is an enlisted supplemental board in June, but no updating required. Next enlisted board will be for Chief Master Sgts in Oct 2010. Since educational records (student's enrollments and test records) have to be validated, there is not any other means to update these for CDC, DL and specialized students to enroll or progress to the next volume within their course without CDSAR. Specialized courses are those that provide career broadening knowledge and information. Examples include Civil Air Patrol Scanner Officer Course, Civil Air Patrol Emergency Services Course and Joint Service Supervisor Safety Course.

Q6: Where are we now in the repair process?

A6: Server hard drives have been replaced without further failures. However, now technicians are experiencing software restoral challenges. Once a solid boot restoral is complete, operating system, application and database loads can progress.

Q7: What is the prognosis?

A7: The aged, fragile nature of the CDSAR system is still presenting problems. Multiple commercial hardware and software technicians are engaged with local communication unit technicians in efforts to restore CDSAR to operation. The current challenge involves the operating system's inability to reload completely, stopping at the same point each time. Once this hurdle is overcome, we will start the data recovery process. Time to complete restoral is still unknown.

Q8: How are those affected being notified?

A8: Air University Registrar (AU/CFR) sent messages to Test Control Facilities and A1DL Vol Ed; critical websites were updated - notifications have been posted on the AU e-Campus Support System, AU Online, a derivative site of the ADLS, and on the Education and Logistics and Communications website.

Q9: If an Airman believes his records might not reflect current PME, etc., completion, what can he do?

A9: If student completed course work and final test prior to 13 May 2010, student should check Air Force Personnel website to ensure all completions (PME and DE) have been posted. If not, only for those meeting upcoming promotion boards, contact AU/CFRO at au.cfro@maxwell.af.mil.

Q10: List all the courses, PME, etc., that interface with CDSAR?

A10: All PME DL programs (except Air Command and Staff College's online master's degree programs) for officer and enlisted, Professional Continuing Education DL programs and distribution of WAPS material (student guide and Tests).

Q11: What is your priority right now? Whose records are being updated manually?

A11: Ensure all officer and promotion boards receive updates before board cut-off.

Q12: Isn't there a backup system in place? If not, why not?

A12: Yes, we had a mirror in place but unfortunately it also failed shortly after the primary server crashed. The overall challenge with CDSAR is that it is the only system that can perform these unique functions at this time. No other current hardware/software platform in the Air Force can immediately meet the functional capabilities of CDSAR. Migrating to another location is not possible due to the age of the software and hardware to support. Newer hardware and software platforms cannot support the functionality without months of code changes. For the past 6 months, AU has been assessing options to modernize and is on the verge of making a decision. Data is safe but the application (CDSAR) needs this unique OS to operate, until a whole new system is stood up.

Q13: Are ADLS courses affected? (Course accessed via Portal) If someone completed an ADLS course, will it be recorded?

A13: Only Air University courses which are hosted on AU Online, a Learning Management System (LMS) derivative site of the ADLS are affected. Within AU Online there are two types of courses, those which are registered for through CDSAR and require CDSAR validation to access the course material and those which are registered for and completed totally inside the learning management system. CDSAR controlled course completions are recorded in CDSAR and MILPDS student records after successfully completing an end of course proctored exam. Non CDSAR course completions are recorded in the student's learning management system transcript along with grade book type entries. Each CDSAR controlled course requires student registration validation through an interface between CDSAR and the learning management to allow access to course material.

Note: The Squadron Officer School Course 20 is hosted on Blackboard not AU Online, but enrollment is through CDSAR, so course completion is not available for Course 20.

The following courses are CDSAR controlled:

- Senior NCO PME Course 14
- Squadron Officers School Course 28
- Instructor Methodology Course
- Career Development Courses
 - Fire Apparatus Driver Operator-ARFF
 - Fire Apparatus Driver Operator-Mobile Water Supply
 - Fire Apparatus Driver Operator-Pumper
 - Fire Instructor I
 - Fire Instructor II
 - Fire Officer I
 - Fire Officer II
- Hazardous Materials (HazMat) Incident Commander
- Hazardous Materials (HazMat) Technician
- Wildland Fire Fighter I
- Airborne Operations Systems Journeyman
- Financial Management and Comptroller Journeyman
- Education and Training Manager Journeyman